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# INDIA'S MOST CLUELESS CAPTAIN-COACH COMBO?

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# FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

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Cricket today

Yes, selecting the team is the job of the selectors. But when it comes to picking a squad, the same can only be done with the consultation of the team management. In that sense, Rohit and Rahul have failed miserably. Their choices of players have left a lot to be desired. If you look at recent times, the backing of Rishabh Pant in T20Is, despite his consistent failure, has stood out like a sore thumb. Few players have got as long a rope in Indian as Pant to prove their credentials. Team India had an alternative ready in Sanju Samson. He made a very good impression in the few opportunities he was given in the limited-overs formats. He played some match-winning knocks, and even in the games India lost, he came up with some defiant performances. Samson has been excellent behind the wickets in the games he has kept. But for some reason, India don't want to back him. Such a flawed selection attitude has only hurt India. To a lesser extent, the same is true in the case of Umran Malik as well. Agreed, he is just a rookie performer, but once he was drafted into international cricket, it was unfair to drop him after just a couple of poor games during the tour of Ireland and England. India went back to Shardul Thakur and Deepak Chahar, although they had failed to prove their form and fitness, respectively. Umran only came back into the equation after India tried all their other resources and failed. Umran proved how much difference genuine pace can make in the matches he has played since his comeback. Slowly and steadily, Shreyas Iyer has shown what consistency is like and how he breathes in a format that suits his approach. Of late, India lacked genuine middle-order batters. It was a prominent feature in the 2019 World Cup. With the 2023 World Cup in India, Iyer's stability means India can be relaxed with how things are shaping up as far as their middle-order is concerned. Iyer will likely come in at number five, and his ability to rotate the strike well, besides finding the gaps, will help India immensely. India need an engine in the middle, and Iyer brings that aspect. He deserves a thorough run in this Indian side and should be respected. India need a solid number four to dictate the play and not be makeshift. India's front three are already settled with Shikhar Dhawan, Rohit Sharma, and Virat Kohli on offer, but a proper number four is what can lend a voice. Iyer comes into play here. He is a natural middle-order player. Enjoy the action-packed edition of Cricket Today...

**Their choices of players have left a lot to be desired.**

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# WHAT'S HOT & NOT

## MARNUS LABUSCHAGNE

**He cut** Thomas to the point boundary to raise his 10th century in his 30th test and third in succession in this series following his 204 and 104 not out in Perth. He's just the 10th batter to post two triple-figure scores immediately after a double-century.

## TRAVIS HEAD

**He reached** triple figures for the fifth time in a Test with a driven boundary through mid-off, continuing his dominance through the off-side. His century came off 125 deliveries and contained 10 boundaries in the second Test against the Windies.

## MEHIDY HASAN

**He hit** his maiden century as Bangladesh recovered from 69-6 to beat India by five runs in the second ODI and seal the three-match series. Mehidy helped Bangladesh to an unlikely victory in the first match by staring down a 51-run deficit with one wicket at hand.

## STEVE SMITH

**Former skipper** Jason Holder took a return catch off his own bowling to dismiss Smith for a rare duck as Australia lost two wickets for two runs in 11 deliveries in the second Test of the series. He is leading the Australian side in the absence of Pat Cummins.

## KRAIGG BRATHWAITE

**West Indies** skipper Kraigg Brathwaite cycled through seven bowlers in pursuit of a wicket on a pitch that favoured the bat, with only Joseph (1-81), Holder (1-42) and Thomas (1-43) getting any rewards. The visitors were beaten in the first Test as well.

## VIRAT KOHLI

**Virat Kohli** opened India's innings with Shikhar Dhawan and hit a boundary in the first ball in the second ODI against Bangladesh. But he dragged one onto his stump-off pacer Ebadot to give Bangladesh a breakthrough. He also failed in the opening ODI.

# & news events

## FINEST ADDITION TO TEAM INDIA

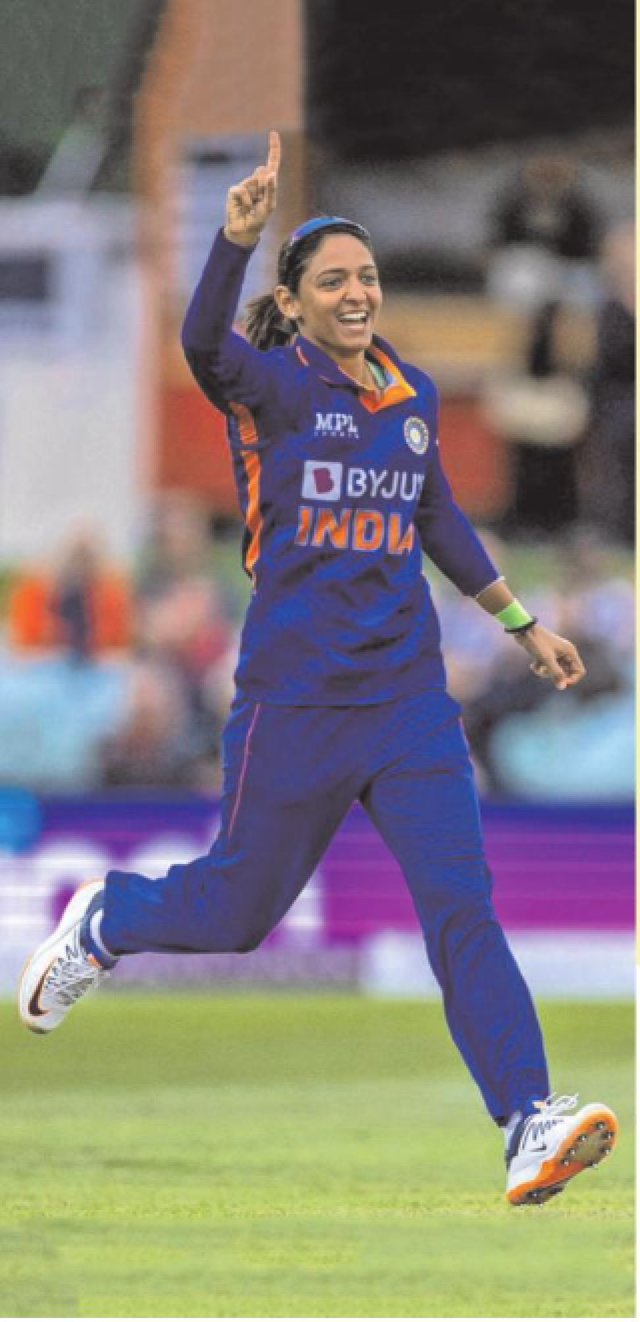
**Kamran Akmal** believes that the addition of Umran Malik has strengthened Team India's bowling unit. He lauded the management for giving regular opportunities to the young pacer. Kamran opined that the Men in Blue would have a good bowling unit for the next year's 50-over World Cup in India. "Umran Malik is a good addition to the Indian bowling unit. It is good that the team management is giving him regular chances. India are known to have a weak bowling unit. "However, things will improve When Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep Singh, Mohammad Shami and Bhuvneshwar Kumar return. They will have a lot of options to choose from. For the Men in Blue, bowling will not be an excuse at the 2023 World Cup." Umran Malik was impressive in the second ODI against Bangladesh. He took two wickets and conceded 58 runs from 10 overs.

## SERIOUS ALLEGATIONS AGAINST PLAYERS

**Former India** player Madan Lal has levelled serious allegations against the current players, saying they don't want to play for the country. He was giving his opinion on India's second successive series defeat in Bangladesh. India lost the second game by 5 runs, conceding the series 0-2 after losing the opening contest by 1 wicket. "The team is not going in the right direction. I haven't seen intensity and josh in the team in the last couple of years," Lal told PTI in an interview. "They are not like an Indian team. The passion of playing for the country is missing. Either the players are tired or they are just going through motions. This is a serious issue," he added. Referring to Rohit's observation, Lal said: "It is unfortunate that the team captain is saying this. Something is seriously wrong."

## WORST BATTER IN ODIs

**Virat Kohli** is having a torrid time in the ongoing ODI series against Bangladesh. After performing well in the Asia Cup and the ICC T20 World Cup, the former skipper was rested from the New Zealand tour. The veteran was recalled for ODIs and Tests in Bangladesh, but the results have been far from satisfactory. He has recorded the worst average for India in ODIs with a minimum of 10 innings while batting among the top three batters in a calendar year. In 2022, his runs have come at an average of 18.9 with just one fifty under his belt. The 34-year-old opened the batting in the second game against the Tigers but managed just 5 runs off 6 balls. He was dismissed for 9 in the first game in Dhaka.



# RIFT WITH RAMESH POWAR

**India women's** cricket team captain Harmanpreet Kaur has broken her silence on the alleged rift with former coach Ramesh Powar, saying the BCCI decided to move him to the National Cricket Academy in Bangalore. Harmanpreet said she always enjoyed working with Powar and that there was no fall-out between the two. According to the reports, Harmanpreet had complained to Jay Shah about the players being uncomfortable with the coaching style of the former cricketer, which forced the national cricket board to take strict action. Hrishikesh Kanitkar was appointed as the batting coach of the women's team, while Ramesh joined the NCA as the new spin bowling coach. "The reports are false as I have always enjoyed working with Ramesh, sir. We have leant a lot from him and grown as a team," said Harmanpreet Kaur.

# FULL SUPPORT TO DAVID WARNER

**Australia skipper** Pat Cummins has promised David Warner the full support of the team as he slammed Cricket Australia for the way he was treated in his attempt to overturn the lifetime captaincy ban. Warner has withdrawn his appeal, accusing CA of mocking the whole process. "I don't know what his manager said, but I chatted with Warner, and he is doing great. We support him, and he is a huge member of the side. He has been fantastic with me throughout my career," said Cummins. "He is a leader in this side, especially in the last few years. He has our support, and we back him and respect his decision." Warner was banned for his involvement in the controversial Cape Town ball-tampering incident.

# RECORD-BREAKING STAR

**Australia opening** batter Usman Khawaja on Thursday, December 8, became the first Australian batter in 3 years to complete 1,000 Test runs in a calendar year He achieved the landmark when he passed 40 on Day 1 of the second Test against the West Indies. While Marnus Labuschagne and Steve Smith have been leading batting charts for the Aussies, Khawaja is the leading run-scorer for Test cricketers in 2022. Marnus Labuschagne, who is the No.1 batter in the ICC Test Rankings, was the last Aussie player to score more than 1000 Test runs in 2019. Usman is the third cricketer after Joe Root (1069) and Jonny Bairstow (1061) to reach the landmark. Khawaja averages over 85 in 9 Tests in 2022, the best among the top three run-scorers in the ongoing year.

# ROHIT SHARMA-RAHUL DRAVID: INDIA'S MOST CLUELESS CAPTAIN-COACH COMBO?

## When Rohit Sharma and Rahul Dravid took over as full-time captain and head coach from Virat Kohli and Ravi Shastri, respectively, there were high hopes from the new combination.

BY RENIN WILBEN

When Rohit Sharma and Rahul Dravid took over as full-time captain and head coach from Virat Kohli and Ravi Shastri, respectively, there were high hopes from the new combination. After all, Rohit is the most successful leader in the history of the Indian Premier League (IPL), having led the Mumbai Indians (MI) to as many as five title triumphs. On the other hand, Dravid came in with the reputation of having done a great job of mentoring the U19 and A squads. With him as head coach, India won the U19 World Cup in 2018. A year after they took charge of the senior national team, Indian cricket seems to have moved back to where they were during the Kohli and Shastri tenure. The Indian cricket team won the bilaterals at home against New Zealand, Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka at the beginning of their stint. However, everything has gone downhill for them from that point. They put up a horrible show in the Asia Cup, were demolished by England in the T20 World Cup 2022 semi-final and have hit a new low by going down to Bangladesh in Bangladesh in the ODI series. India's recent failures raise the big question – are Rohit and Dravid India's most clueless captain-coach combo?

### FLAWED SELECTIONS

**Yes, selecting** the team is the job of the selectors. But when it comes to picking a squad, the same can only be done with the consultation of the team management. In that sense, Rohit and Rahul have failed miserably. Their choices of players have left a lot to be desired. If you look at recent times, the backing of Rishabh Pant

in T20Is, despite his consistent failure, has stood out like a sore thumb. Few players have got as long a rope in Indian as Pant to prove their credentials. Team India had an alternative ready in Sanju Samson. He made a very good impression in the few opportunities he was given in the limited-overs formats. He played some match-winning knocks, and even in the games India lost, he came up with some defiant performances. Samson has been excellent behind the wickets in the games he has kept. But for some reason, India don't want to back him. Such a flawed selection attitude has only hurt India. To a lesser extent, the same is true in the case of Umran Malik as well. Agreed, he is just a rookie performer, but once he was drafted into international cricket, it was unfair to drop him after just a couple of poor games during the tour of Ireland and England. India went back to Shardul Thakur and Deepak Chahar, although they had failed to prove their form and fitness, respectively. Umran only came back into the equation after India tried all their other resources and failed. Umran proved how much difference genuine pace can make in the matches he

has played since his comeback.

## NO CLARITY IN DECISION-MAKING

**Lack of** decision-making skills has been another Achilles' heel evident in the Rohit-Dravid tenure. Under them, players are being rested literally at their whims and fancies. Debuts and captaincy stints have been handed out like lottery tickets. We have lost count of the number of players who have been given India caps in recent times. And never has Indian cricket had so many leaders as we have seen under the current captain-coach regime. Forget about the others. Rohit and Dravid themselves have taken breaks for reasons unknown. Workload management? Really? In the latest saga in Bangladesh, Rishabh Pant was relieved from the ODI squad. After arriving in Bangladesh, he told Dravid and Rohit that he wanted some time away from the game. Another bizarre development in the ever-growing list of Dravid and Rohit's blunders. Indian cricket is in complete doldrums off the field, and the results are only a reflection of the mayhem that seems to be going from bad to worse with every passing series. ■

# LIST OF MOST CENTURIES AT EACH BATTING POSITION IN ODIs

Arguably the greatest batsman of the modern era, Sachin Tendulkar holds the record for most centuries as an opener in the ODI. The master blaster has struck 45 centuries in 340 innings as an opener...

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BY ABHINAV TYAGI

The craze for the fifty-over format has declined since the introduction of domestic T20 leagues and the ICC World Test Championship. A host of experts and cricketers, including Aakash Chopra, Wasim Akram, Ravichandran Ashwin, and Usman Khawaja, have admitted that the ODI is dying and should be revamped or stopped. ICC cleared the air around the one-day cricket and said they treat all three formats equally. Nonetheless, within a year, India will host the fifty-over World Cup, where players will look to register new records. Recently, Australia's David Warner scored his 44th international century as an opener and is just one short of equalling the great Sachin Tendulkar. This article will shed light on the players who have scored the most centuries at each batting position in ODIs.

## NO.1 - SACHIN TENDULKAR (45)

**Arguably the** greatest batsman of the modern era, Sachin Tendulkar holds the record for most centuries as an opener in the ODI. The master blaster has struck 45 centuries in 340 innings as an opener. Tendulkar's first ODI century came against Australia in 1994 when he scored 110. Tendulkar's last century batting first came against Bangladesh at Mirpur, when he brought up his 100th international ton.

## 2. SANATH JAYASURIYA – (28)

**The explosive** opening Sri Lankan batter Sanath Jayasuriya is next in line to Sachin for the most ODI centuries. Jayasuriya has scored 28 centuries, one more than Hashim Amla and Rohit Sharma, who are third with 27 centuries. Sanath scored his first ODI hundred against New Zealand in 1994. He amassed 143 batting at the no.2 spot. He scored his 28th century against India in 2009, where he scored 114.

## NO. 3 - VIRAT KOHLI – (36)

**Former India** captain Virat Kohli has struck 36 centuries batting at one down, seven more than Ricky

Ponting, who is next to Kohli with 29 centuries. Kohli's first century in a one-down position was against Bangladesh in 2010, when he scored an unbeaten 102. It was Kohli's 2nd ODI century since he scored his maiden century batting at the no.4 position. Kohli's latest one-day century at his preferred spot came against West Indies in 2019, when he scored an unbeaten 114.

### NO.4 - ROSS TAYLOR – (19)

**New Zealand's** leading run-scorer, Ross Taylor, holds the record for most centuries at the no.4 spot with 19 hundred. Taylor has scored 40 international hundreds, but his first century at no.4 came against Bangladesh in 2008, where he scored 103. The 38-year-old scored his 19th ODI century at no.4 against India and amassed an unbeaten 109.

### NO. 5 - YUVRAJ SINGH – (7)

**Indian legend** stamps his name at the top for most ODI centuries batting at the no.5 position. Yuvraj struck seven hundred when he batted at three down. He has one century more than AB de Villiers, who has six to his name. Singh's first century in 5th position came against Bangladesh in 2003, when he scored an unbeaten 102. Yuvraj's last century at the 5th spot came in 2008 against England, nine years earlier than his final ODI game. He scored 118 in that match in Indore.

### NO. 6 - JOS BUTTLER – (4)

**England star** opener Jos Buttler who showers zero

mercy on his opposition, holds an illustrious record batting at the no.6 position in ODIs. Before shifting to the opening slot, Buttler used to bat lower down the order and has four centuries batting at no.6. Jos scored his first-century batting down the order against New Zealand in 2015, where he scored 129. His 4th ton at the no. 6 spot was against Pakistan in 2019. He scored 103.

### NO. 7 - MS DHONI – (2)

**The captain** Cool MS Dhoni has hit two centuries at the no.7 spot, and no other batsmen have struck more than one at this position in ODIs. MS has hit ten ODI hundred, but his first at no.7 came against Africa XI when he scored an unbeaten 139 in 2007. His second and last century was against arch-nemesis Pakistan in 2012, when he amassed 113.

### NO. 8 - SIMI SINGH – (1)

**Ireland's Simi** Singh is the only bowler to hit an ODI century at the No.8 slot. The Punjab-born Irish player scored one century against South Africa in 2021, scoring 100 off 91 balls. No player in the history of ODI cricket has struck a century at no.9, 10, or 11th position, but the following are the highest individual scores at these positions.

**NO. 9- ANDRE RUSSELL - 92*** against India in 2011.

**NO. 10 - RAVI RAMPAUL - 86*** against India in 2011.

**NO. 11 - MOHAMMAD AMIR - 58** against England in 2016. ■

# SHREYAS IYER LOOKS SET TO BE A MAINSTAY IN THIS INDIAN CRICKET TEAM IN ODIs: HERE'S HOW

2022 has been kind to Iyer as far as the 50-over format is concerned. Iyer is the 3rd-highest scorer for India this year in ODIs behind Shikhar Dhawan and Shubman Gill...

BY CT CONTRIBUTOR

Shreyas Iyer is enjoying a purple patch with the bat in the 50-over format for India. Iyer showed his skills once again in the recently concluded ODI series versus New Zealand, which India lost. One of the biggest takeaways from India's performance was the impact Iyer had. Slowly and steadily, Iyer has shown what consistency is like and how he breathes in a format that suits his approach. Of late, India lacked genuine middle-order batters. It was a prominent feature in the 2019 World Cup. With the 2023 World Cup in India, Iyer's stability means India can be relaxed with how things are shaping up as far as their middle-order is concerned. Iyer will likely come in at number five, and his ability to rotate the strike well, besides finding the gaps, will help India immensely. India need an engine in the middle, and Iyer brings that aspect. He deserves a thorough run in this Indian side and should be respected. Here we analyse why Iyer looks set to be a mainstay in this Indian cricket team in ODIs.

### BREAKING DOWN IYER'S ODI CAREER

**Iyer made** his ODI debut in 2017 versus Sri Lanka. Since then, he has featured in 38 matches, scoring 1534 runs at an average of 49.48 (SR 96.17). He has so far managed to slam two hundreds and 14 fifties. With the World Cup set to be held in India next year, Iyer can promise fireworks. On home soil, he has mustered 624 runs from 14 matches at 56.72. He has registered one ton and six fifties, with the best of 113*. In away conditions (home of opposition), he has scored a notable 910 runs at a decent average of 45.50. He has tallied one century and seven half-centuries.

### 2022 HAS BEEN IYER'S YEAR IN ODI CRICKET

**2022 has** been kind to Iyer as far as the 50-over format is concerned. Iyer is the 3rd-highest scorer for

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India this year in ODIs behind Shikhar Dhawan and Shubman Gill. Notably, Iyer has piled up 721 across 16 games at 60.08. He has smashed Seven fifties and a ton.

## WHY CAN IYER BE INDIA'S MAIN ASSET AT NUMBER FOUR?

**India need** a solid number four to dictate the play and not be makeshift. India's front three are already settled with Shikhar Dhawan, Rohit Sharma, and Virat Kohli on offer, but a proper number four is what can lend a voice. Iyer comes into play here. He is a natural middle-order player, and him coming at number four will help India in terms of balance. India can then pick one from Sanju Samson, Rishabh Pant, or KL Rahul to don the number five role, with Hardik Pandya and Ravindra Jadeja being the all-rounders who can finish. Iyer has done well at number 4 for India. As per ESPNcricinfo, he has scored 684 runs at 57.00. Notably, both of his ODI hundreds have come while batting in this position. He has also bagged five fifties.

## NUMBERS IN THE MIDDLE OVERS FOR IYER

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**In the** middle overs (16-40), Iyer has done an able job. His 999 runs at an average of 49.95 look strong on paper. Middle overs are when you construct the innings to help the side maximise at the death. Iyer has 397 singles and 49 twos, and six threes in the middle overs. It shows why he is a suitable act in terms of strike rotation. He has also smashed 19 sixes and 93 fours and has been dismissed 20 times.

## EXPERIMENTATION VERSUS NEW ZEALAND AND OTHER OPTIONS

**In the** recently concluded ODI series versus NZ, Iyer came to bat at number three in the absence of Kohli, who was rested alongside Rohit. And Iyer delivered the goods, scoring a solid 76-ball 80 in the first match and then a decent 49 in the third match that didn't have a result later on. Regarding other options, Rishabh Pant failed to show anything substantial when given a chance at number four. Even overall in ODIs, Pant has struggled. Suryakumar Yadav is yet to make a name in ODIs. He is a stellar option in the 20-over format, but in ODIs, he has struggled. India have plenty of options at the top, but it's the middle where you need solidity, and Iyer makes a strong case for himself. ■

# FIVE MAJOR RECORDS WHICH INDIAN PLAYERS BROKE IN 2022

The former India skipper had a year to cherish for life. After a struggling two years, the 34-year-old regained his lost mojo in the latter half of the year. He played several memorable innings after his 71st international century...

BY ABHINAV TYAGI

2022 is coming to an end, and the year has been a mixed bag for the Men in Blue. The Rohit Sharma-led side has been at the top of their game in the bilateral series but failed to leave a mark at mega-events. India won 5 ODI and 8 T20I series this year but faced an early exit in the Asia Cup 2022 and got ousted from the T20 World Cup in the semi-finals. Failures at big events have drawn criticism towards the team and players collectively. However, several players accomplished individual milestones and achievements. India have three ODIs and two Test match series scheduled against Bangladesh before ending 2022, but this article will focus on the five major records broken by Indian players in 2022.

### VIRAT KOHLI BECAME T20 WORLD CUP'S LEADING RUN SCORER

**The former** India skipper had a year to cherish for life. After a struggling two years, the 34-year-old regained his lost mojo in the latter half of the year. He played several memorable innings after his 71st international century against Afghanistan in the Asia Cup. Kohli entered the T20 World Cup with 845 runs and required 171 runs to surpass Mahela Jayawardene's

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record of 1016 runs to become the leading run scorer in the elite tournament. Kohli, in six matches, gathered 296 runs and comfortably displaced the Sri Lankan legend as the tournament's all-time leading run scorer. Virat ended the recent World Cup edition with the most fifties (4). Kohli achieved the milestone in 25 innings, six less than Jayawardene and has 1141 runs in the competition in 27 matches.

### SURYAKUMAR YADAV BECAME THE SECOND INDIAN TO TOP THE ICC T20I BATTING CHARTS

**India's batting** sensation Suryakumar Yadav has been in scintillating form since his debut in March 2021. SKY has played 42 T20I matches and scored 1408 runs. It includes two centuries and twelve half-centuries. In just one and a half years, SKY reached his career-best ranking and topped the ICC T20I rankings on November 2. SKY is currently the number one T20I batter with 890 points. He even touched 895 rating points in ICC Rankings for Batters in T20Is, coming close to Virat Kohli's all-time high points of 897 (The highest by an Indian). With the feat, SKY also became the second Indian in T20I history to top the T20I ranking. Only Virat Kohli has enjoyed this luxury.

### BHUVNESHWAR KUMAR CREATES HISTORY AFTER BOWLING IN THE POWERPLAY

**Bhuvneshwar Kumar** also had a mixed year. He has been exceptional at the start of the innings but faced fans' flak for his below-par bowling in death overs. Bhuvi has picked up 36 wickets this year, the second most in 2022. With the feat, he surpassed Yuzvendra Chahal as India's leading wicket-taker in T20Is. By the end of the year, Bhuvi has 90 wickets in 87 matches, while Chahal sits in the second position with 87 wickets in 71 games. Another major world record that Bhuvi registered this year was to surpass Tim Southee as the leading wicket-taker in the powerplay in T20Is. Bhuvi has 43 wickets in 74 innings in the powerplay, and Southee with 34 wickets in 71 innings.

## MOST RUNS IN A CALENDAR YEAR

**Suryakumar has** had a tryst with records this year and broke a minimum of one record in almost every outing this year. Out of the many records, one that stands out is SKY scoring more than 1000 runs in 2022. Surya has gathered 1164 runs in 2022, the most by any player this year and became the first Indian player to score 1000+ runs in a calendar year. SKY is behind Pakistan's Mohammad Rizwan to achieve the most runs in a single year in T20Is, as the Pakistani wicketkeeper-batsman scored 1326 runs in 2021.

## MOST T20I WINS IN A CALENDAR YEAR

**As mentioned** earlier, besides poor results at mega-events, the Men in Blue have had exceptional results in the bilateral series. India played 38 matches this year and won 28 games, the most by any team in a single year. Pakistan previously held the same record when they won 20 games in 2021. India's previous best record in a calendar year was 15 wins in 2016. ■

# FOUR INDIAN CRICKETERS WHO MARRIED A FOREIGNER

The flamboyant Hardik Pandya ruled the internet when he announced his engagement with Siberian dancer Natasa Stankovic. The duo got engaged on January 1, 2020, and tied the knot on May 31, 2020...

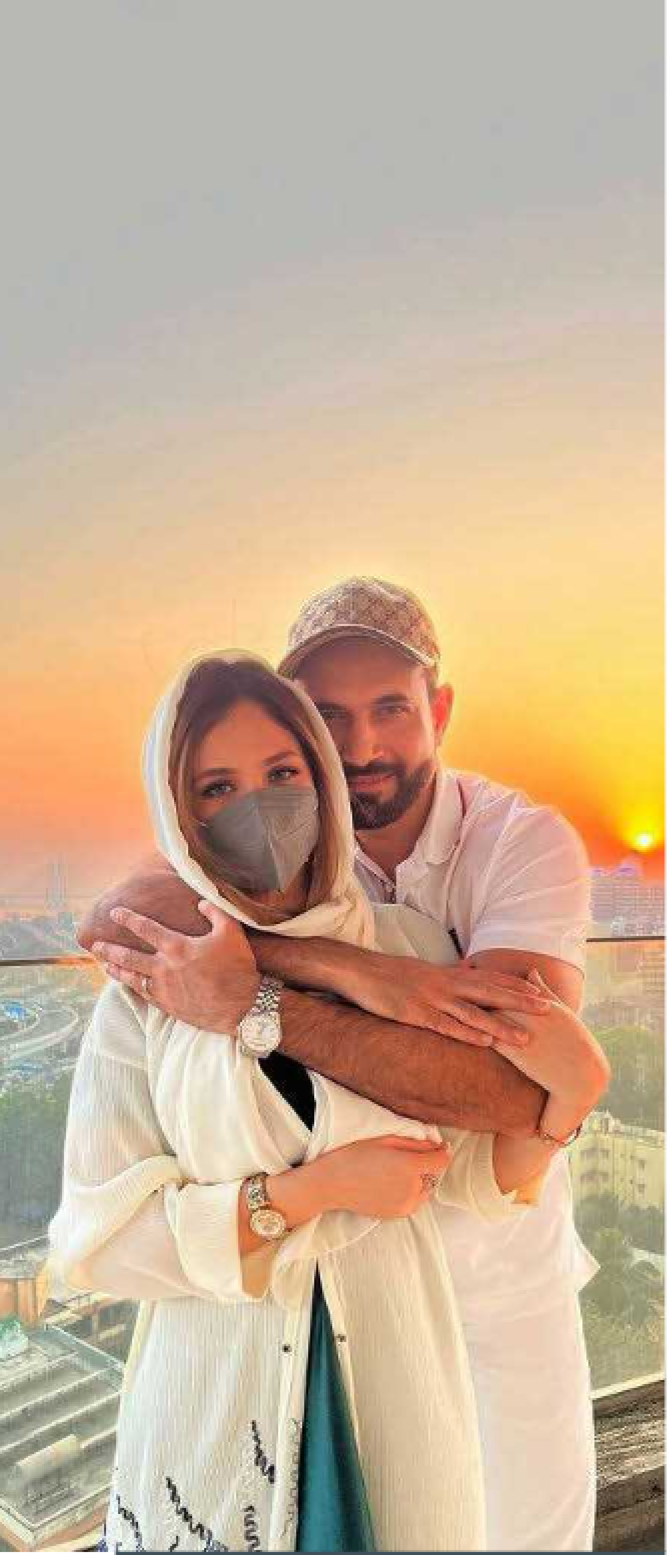
BY ABHINAV TYAGI

*The wedding season is on, and cricketers are no exception to the trends. Several bachelors on the Indian side are likely to tie the knot soon, and one of them is Lucknow Supergiant skipper KL Rahul. The 30-year-old is reportedly getting married to his long-time girlfriend Athiya Shetty early next year, as a few news portals reported that KL asked the BCCI for a break during the Sri Lankan tour scheduled in January. Many current and former cricketers have set the media on fire with their weddings. Be it with grand scale fat weddings, controversial ones, privately held affairs and those which took place in a foreign land. However, this article will focus on those Indian cricketers who married a foreigner.*

### 1. HARDIK PANDYA AND NATASA STANKOVIC:

**The flamboyant** Hardik Pandya ruled the internet when he announced his engagement with Siberian dancer Natasa Stankovic. The duo got engaged on January 1, 2020, and tied the knot on May 31, 2020. Just two months after the marriage, the couple welcomed their child Agastya. Born in Siberia, Natasa moved to India in 2012 and tried her hand at acting. She fetched a few item numbers and short roles in Bollywood movies but gained popularity after participating in a dance reality show, Nach Baliye. Natasha and Hardik met at a nightclub and were unaware of each other's profession. The duo soon began dating and announced their engagement when Hardik posted a video of him proposing to Natasa on a ship. He titled the video, 'Mai Tera tu meri jaana, jaane saara hindustan.'

**3.YUVRAJ SINGH AND HAZEL KEECH:** **Another flamboyant** figure in Indian cricket to marry a foreigner is the 2011 ICC World Cup winner and player of the tournament winner Yuvraj Singh. Yuvraj married UK-based actress Hazel Keech. Hazel was born in Essex and has been staying in India since 2005 after she received work offers during her holiday in Mumbai in 2005. Hazel gained popularity after her much-appreciated role in the 2011 Bollywood movie Bodyguard, which featured Salman Khan in the lead role. Yuvraj got interested in Hazel in 2011 when they met at a friend's birthday party. However, Hazel ignored Yuvraj for a long time before giving up and started dating him. The duo decided to get married in November 2016. Yuvraj and Hazel welcomed a child after six years of marriage and named him Orion Keech Singh.



**2. IRFAN PATHAN - SAFA BAIG:** **Former India** left-arm pacer turned cricket analyst Irfan Pathan married Jeddah, Saudi Arabia-based model Safa Baig on February 4th, 2016. The couple got married in a highly private affair in Jeddah, and selected dignitaries attended their wedding. Irfan and Safa Baig met at a social event in 2014, where the couple fell in love. After dating for two years and keeping aside their age difference of 10 years, they got married and have a son named Imran Khan Pathan. Safa has done modelling and appeared on several cover pages of magazines in the Middle East. She is a nail artist and worked as a journalist.

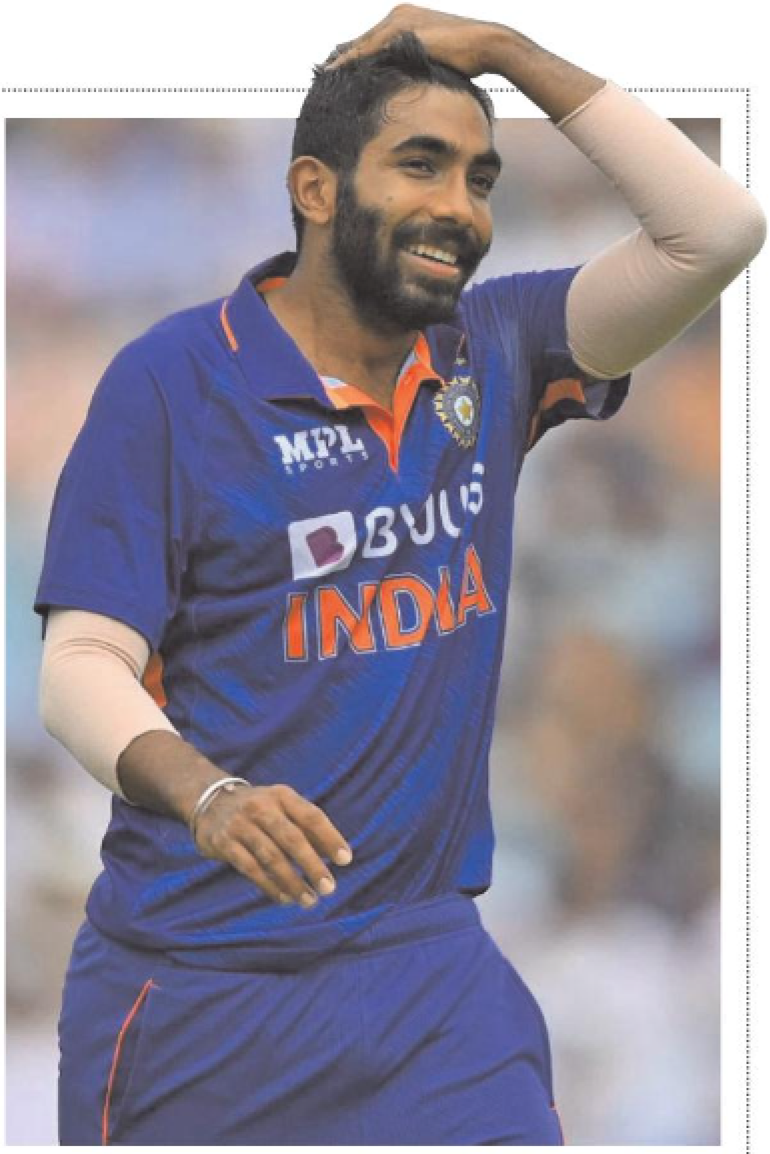
**4. MANDEEP SINGH AND JAGDEEP JASWAL:** **The 30-year-old** Indian cricketer married UK born and brought up healthcare assistant Jagdeep Jaswal in December 2016 in his hometown, Phagwara. Jagdeep is also a make-up artist. Her parents made sure she stayed connected to her Indian roots. Thus, she had a mandatory tour of India once a year. During one of her visits, she met Mandeep via a mutual friend. They started dating a year after knowing each other and have been each other's biggest supporters. Mandeep, who played for Punjab Kings, got engaged to Jagdeep a day before their wedding and welcomed a son in January 2021. MS Dhoni and Harbhajan Singh also attended Mandeep's wedding.

# FIVE MOST INJURY PRONE CRICKETERS IN 2022

The 29-yearold suffered injuries on multiple occasions this year and was out from the Asia Cup and T20 World Cup...

BY ABHINAV TYAGI

*2022 is coming to an end. This passing year has offered some of the best cricketing moments. England lifted their 2nd T20 World Cup title in November when they beat Pakistan in the finals. The underdogs Sri Lanka emerged as the Asian champions defying all the turbulent conditions in their country. Besides some of the best individual and team performances, many players had a forgettable year as they had to miss out on most of the action due to injuries. This article will focus on five cricketers who suffered injuries the most this year and missed out on important games and tournaments.*



## 1. JASPRIT BUMRAH

**India's bowling** spearhead Jasprit Bumrah has been missing from the Indian team, and captain Rohit Sharma can vouch for it. The 29-year-old suffered injuries on multiple occasions this year and was out from the Asia Cup and T20 World Cup. In July, in the limited-overs series against England, Bumrah sustained a back injury and was ruled out of the series. Initially feared as a back spasm was a stress fracture, the MI star had to miss the Asia Cup. Bumrah returned to the side for India's home series against Australia but soon picked up another back injury and got ruled out of the all-important T20 World Cup. Bumrah has not had an entire presence in the Indian side since July 2022 and will also miss the upcoming tour against Bangladesh.

## 2. RAVINDRA JADEJA

**Another player** surrounded by injuries this year is CSK star Ravindra Jadeja. The 34-year-old first sustained a knee injury in December 2021, which ruled him out of the Proteas tour in January 2022. Further, in the IPL, besides his conflict with the franchise, Jadeja sustained a rib-injury mid-season, which ruled him out for the remainder of the tournament. If that was not enough, the southpaw suffered a freak knee injury during the Asia Cup 2022, which sidelined him from the tournament, and he still has not recovered from that injury. Jadeja, on an off-day, took a challenge to remain balanced on a ski board, but his worst nightmare became true as he lost balance, twisted his knee, and got operated on it. India missed Jadeja's services in the 2022 T20 World Cup, and the 34-year-old's return still needs to be confirmed.

### 3. SHAHEEN AFRIDI

**Pakistan's bowling** spearhead Shaheen Afridi had a year full of heartbreaks, struggles and injuries. In July 2022, Afridi injured his knee while fielding a ball at the boundary ropes. The 22-year-old suffered an ACL knee injury and was out for several months. He missed the Asia Cup, where Pakistan suffered heartbreak after they lost to Sri Lanka in the finals. Shaheen's first match after their return was in the T20 World Cup, where he did not look 100% fit. The worst came for him during the final, where he injured his leg again after taking a running catch. He was forced out of the match and could not complete his spell, which turned the game in England's favour. Shaheen was advised two weeks' rest but suffered appendix pain and underwent an appendectomy. Shaheen will take another six weeks to return.

### 4. MITCHELL MARSH

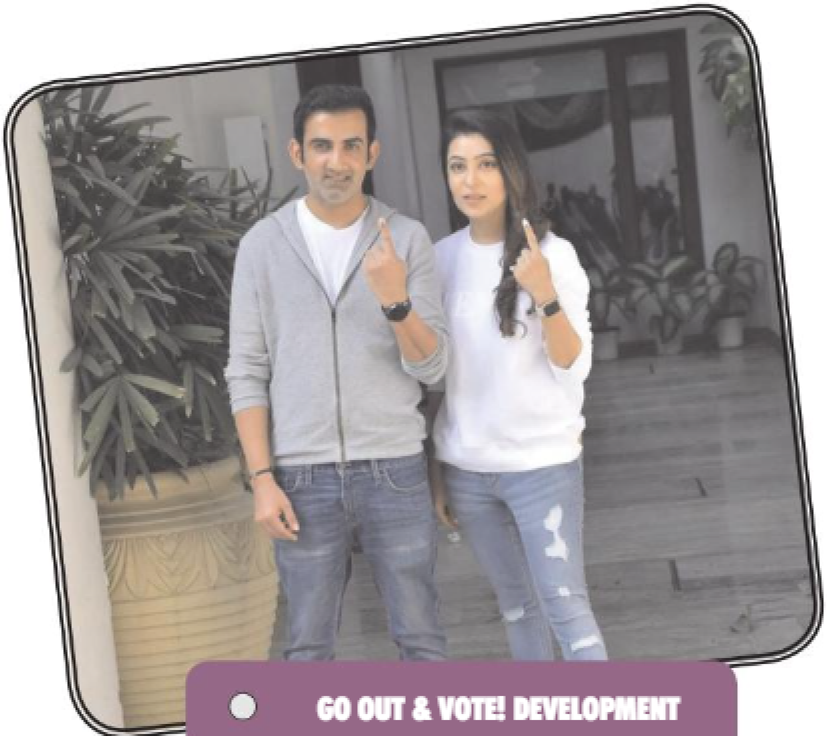
**Australian all-rounder** Mitchell Marsh is injury prone, and 2022 is a perfect example. During the away tour to Pakistan in January, the 31-year-old first suffered a hip injury and was out for the remainder of the series. As a result, Marsh missed a few IPL games with Delhi Capitals before regaining full fitness. To follow that, he injured his ankle during the Zimbabwe tour in August and was also sidelined from the New Zealand series. Cricket Australia speculated him to be fit for the India tour but keeping the World Cup in mind, Marsh returned to action in the World Cup. Marsh's latest injury came before the Big Bash League, as he underwent keyhole surgery on a long-standing ankle issue in November, which ruled him out for three months.

### 5. MARK WOOD

**England's fastest** bowler Mark Wood was on point for the Three Lions in the T20 World Cup but missed most of 2022 sitting out with injuries. Firstly, Wood missed the whole summer without a single game under his belt as he sustained a serious elbow injury during the West Indies tour. As a result, Wood had to skip the IPL. Wood returned to action in the T20 World Cup. But was out from the knock-out stage due to a hip injury. The 32-year-old also missed the first Test against Pakistan due to the same injury.

# INSTA

FITTED & KITTED



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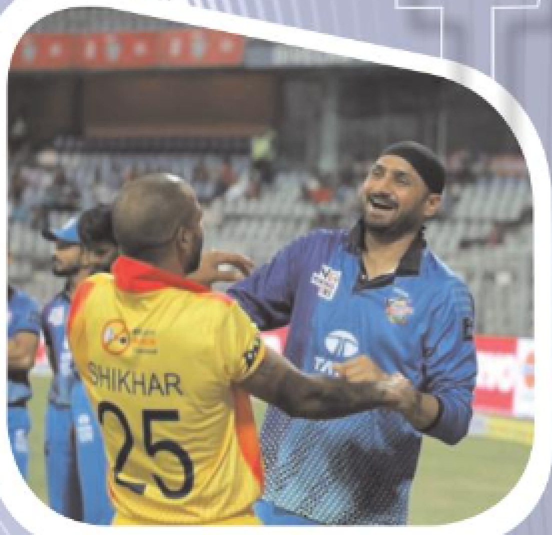
PHYSIO Planet

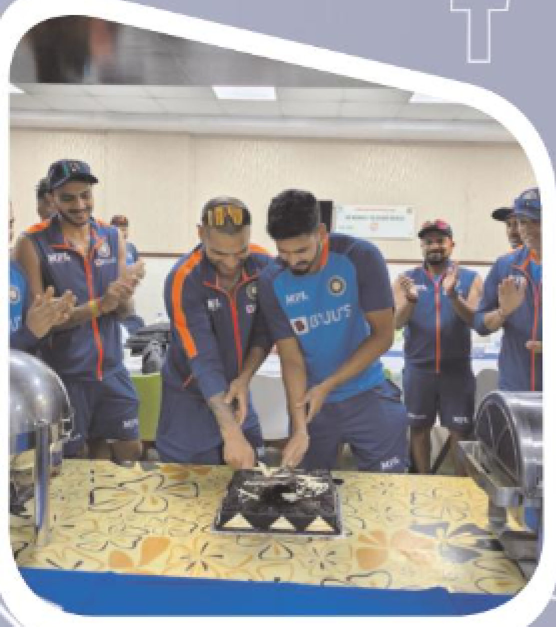
THANK YOU FOR BEING THE DEDICATED, THOUGHTFUL, AND COMPASSIONATE PHYSIO

CAN I TAKE ONE SELFIE PLEASE @RASHID.KHAN19 GREAT TO SEE YOU BROTHER

Humbled to be recognised as the Youth Icon of the Year - Yuvraj Singh



Happy birthday brother #shikhardhawan - Harbhajan Singh



would like to take this opportunity to thank each and everyone - Shreyas Iyer

Injury, in general, teaches you to appreciate every moment - Mohammad Shami

# Tweets of the Week

@cricketaakash: "Stellar comeback by Bangladesh. Mehidy Hasan Miraz has done it twice"

@MichaelVaughan: "Another Marnus Ton .. What a surprise !!!! #AUSvsWI Incredible player"

@bhogleharsha: "Might need fog lights in Mumbai today. Can't remember the air being worse"

@IrfanPathan: "Gritty from @ImRo45 too giving everything despite the injury"

@nassercricket: "That was one of the greatest exhibitions of test captaincy I have ever seen"

# TRENDING

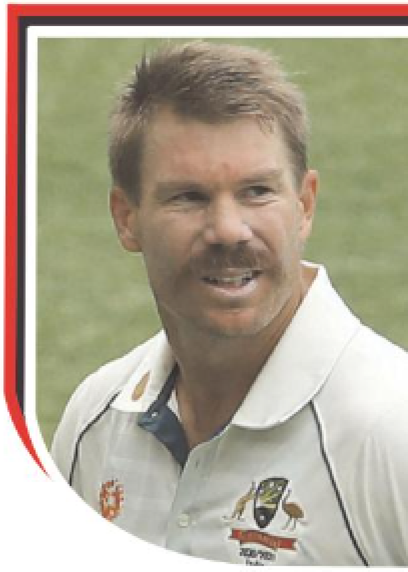
"One player I am most excited to see playing for India after Sachin Tendulkar is Umran Malik"

## Sunil Gavaskar on new sensation

## ROHIT SHARMA IS THE GOAT

**Rohit Sharma** almost took India to win with a broken thumb in the second ODI against Bangladesh. However, his 51 off 28 went in vain as Mustafizur Rahman bowled a perfect delivery to stop Rohit from going for a six, and the hosts won the game by 5 runs. Bangladesh have won two consecutive series against the Men in Blue in the fifty-over format. Chasing 272 to level the series, India were almost out of the contest after another top-order collapse. Shreyas Iyer, who has been India's only consistent performer in one-day internationals, played another impressive knock. He got support from Axar Patel, who also hit a fifty. In the end, the task came to Rohit, who batted at the No.9 slot due to the injury sustained in the Bangladesh innings. Fans were delighted with Sharma's effort and praised him for trying his best to win with an injured thumb. He was called the GOAT by many supporters.

## ALL IS NOT WELL



**Australia player** David Warner has slammed Cricket Australia, withdrawing his appeal to get his leadership ban overturned. He has said that counsel assisting the independent panel for the hearing made offensive comments in the process. An angry Warner has given up on getting his ban overturned in what appears to be a dysfunctional process introduced by Cricket Australia. Warner was banned for life from any leadership role after his involvement in the 2018 Cape Town 'ball-tampering' scandal. Cricket Australia last month made amendments to its code of conduct, allowing the players and officials to appeal their bans. Warner took to social media to launch an all-out attack on CA. "My family is more important to me than cricket," he said.

## BUMRAH TO COMPLETE STUNNING RETURN

**India's star** seamer Jasprit Bumrah has been out of action since he picked up a back injury against Australia in September. Due to his prolonged back issue, he missed the Asia Cup in August, and his latest injury ruled him out of the T20 World Cup. Bumrah's fitness has been an issue for the side, but the management and fans have been waiting for their bowling spearhead to return, as he is the main guy to uplift the bowling standards. The good news for the fans is that a BCCI official, in conversation with Inside sports, revealed that Bumrah would be back for the Australia series in February. The Aussies will tour India in February for a four-Test and three-ODI match series. The BCCI official also said Bumrah has been recovering well and might return for the Sri Lanka ODI series in late January.

# UP, CLOSE & PERSONAL

## "I AM FOND OF CHICKEN TIKKA MASALA"

— RAHUL DRAVID

**Name:** Rahul Sharad Dravid, **Born:** January 11, 1973, **Place of Birth:** Indore, Madhya Pradesh, **Batting Style:** Right-hand Bat, **Bowling Style:** Right-arm Off break

*Rahul Dravid is the current head coach of the Indian team. He was one of the most successful Indian cricketers during his playing days and was renowned for his technique, temperament and talent.*

**Nick names**
Jimmy, The Wall

**Favourite Shot**
Square Cut

**Favourite Cricketer**
Gundappa Viswanath

**Favourite Bowler**
Michael Holding

**Favourite Sport**
Hockey

**Favourite Cricket Ground**
Eden Gardens

**Favourite Singer**
Bob Dylan

**Favourite Color**
Blue

**Favourite Sportsperson**
Roger Federer

## My Favourites

**Favorite Food**
Chicken Tikka Masala

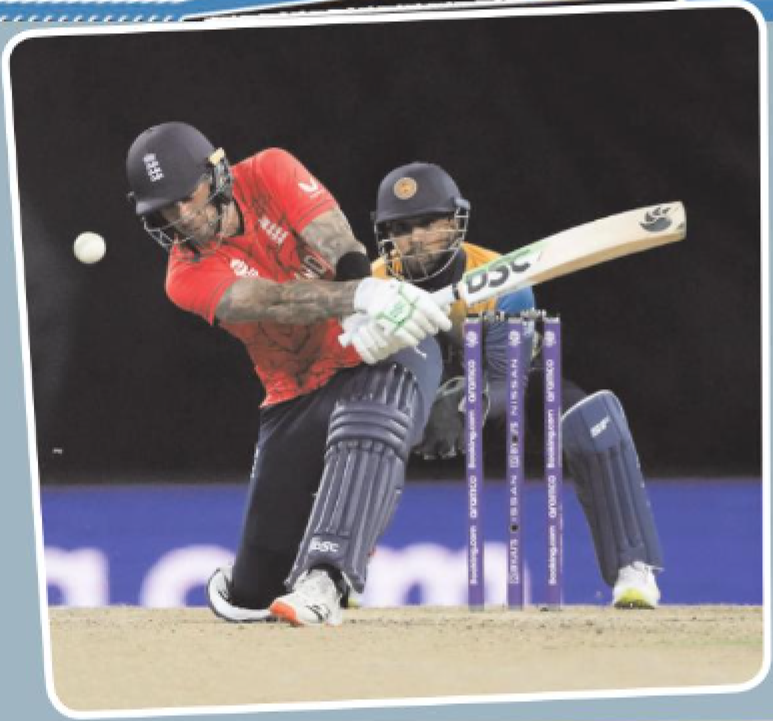
**Favourite Actress**
Demi Moore

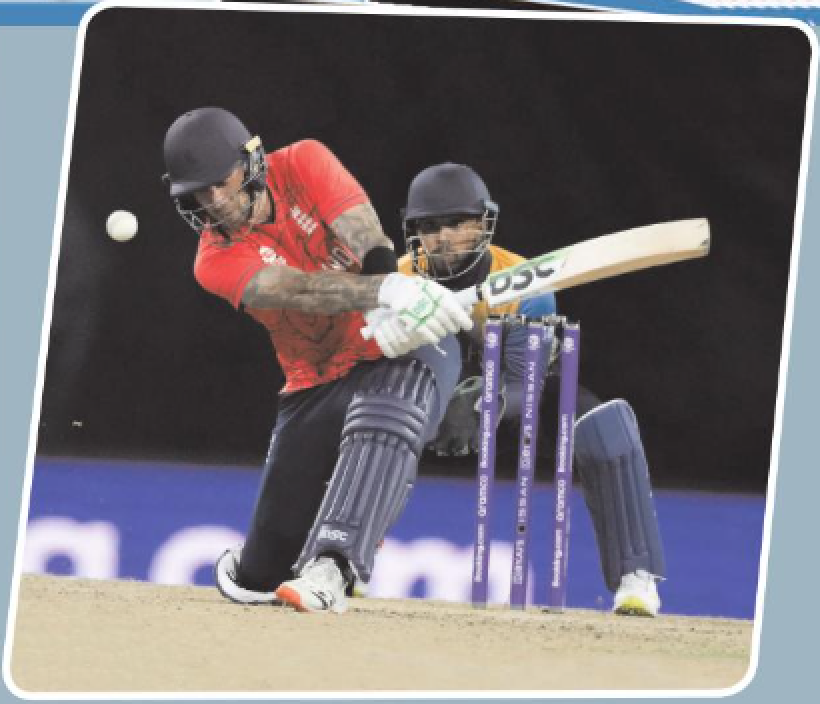
**Favorite Actor**
Tom Cruise

**Favourite Film**
Ghost

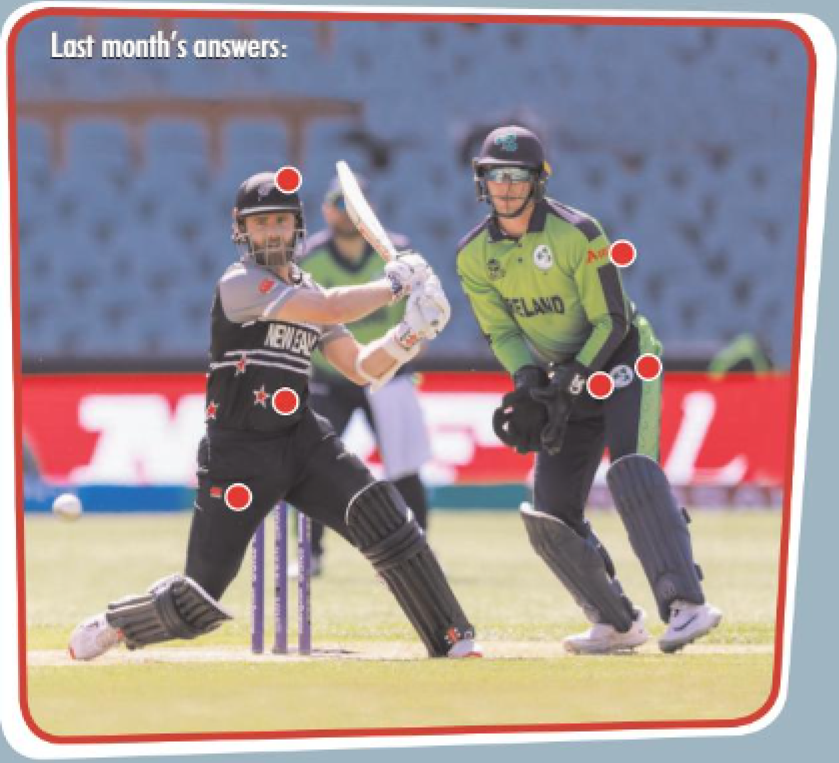
# FIND SIX DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THESE TWO PICTURES

## CONTEST





**Last month's winners:** Vishal (Delhi), Nilesh (Gurugram), Surbhi (Noida)



Last month's answers:

In this contest you have to spot six differences between both the pictures. Three lucky winners will get a Parker pen each.

### Rules & Regulations for the contest

- **Last date for entries:** Dec 16, 2022.
- A draw will determine the winner.
- Winners name will be announced in the next issue of cricket today.
- The prizes may vary from the one shown.
- Send in your answers along with your name, occupation, address, contact No. and Email ID at our postal address.

### Our postal address

**Cricket Today:** X-30, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-II,
New Delhi-110020 Ph: 011 40712100
Fax: 011 41611866

# BEST OF THE WEEK

### HIGHEST ODI AVERAGE FOR INDIA IN AWAY LOSSES (MIN. 1000 RUNS)

35.3 - ROHIT SHARMA*
34.3 - RAVINDRA JADEJA
34.3 - VIRAT KOHLI
33.9 - SHIKHAR DHAWAN
31.7 - MS DHONI

### MOST RUNS SCORED IN AN OVER FOR INDIA IN ODIs

28 RUNS - SHREYAS vs CHASE*
26 RUNS - ROHIT vs DOHERTY
26 RUNS - SEHWAG vs DILHARA

### INDIANS TO BE PART OF MOST LOST MATCHES

256 - SACHIN TENDULKAR*
210 - RAHUL DRAVID
186 - MS DHONI
182 - MOHAMMAD AZHARUDDIN
179 - SOURAV GANGULY

### HIGHEST ODI AVERAGE FOR INDIA AFTER 34 INNINGS

52.35 - MS DHONI
50.91 - AMBATI RAYUDU
49.48 - SHREYAS IYER*
47.13 - VIRAT KOHLI
45.93 - KL RAHUL

### MOST WICKETS FOR INDIA SINCE BUMRAH'S DEBUT

319 - BUMRAH*
318 - ASHWIN
253 - JADEJA
253 - SHAMI

### MOST SIXES AGAINST BANGLADESH

47 - ROHIT SHARMA (30 INNS)*
46 - E CHIGUMBURA (70 INNS)
41 - H MASAKADZA (81 INNS)

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